

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
Office of the Secretary of the Navy  
United States Department of the Navy  
The Pentagon  
Room 4E686  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus,

I am writing you to request that the Navy name the next Virginia Class submarine after the State of New Jersey. My home state has a long history with the United States Navy and in particular with the "Silent Service." I believe that based on this storied history it is appropriate that New Jersey should be honored by having the next submarine named after it. While two battleships (BB16 and BB62) have been named after New Jersey, the name has been stricken from the Naval Vessel Register and thus available for use with a submarine.

As you may know, the first modern submarine was designed and built in New Jersey by John Philip Holland who is considered by the Navy to be "the father of the modern submarine." Holland immigrated to New Jersey in approximately 1873 and, shortly thereafter, began designing and building submarines in New Jersey. For the next 25 years, Holland worked on perfecting his design; culminating in the *Holland VI*, which was laid down at the Crescent Shipyard in Elizabethport, New Jersey in 1896. That submarine performed so well that on April 11, 1900, the date now celebrated as the birthday of the U.S. Submarine Force, the Navy bought *Holland VI* and then agreed to purchase seven more submarines of the same design. The *Holland VI* was then commissioned as the *USS Holland* in honor of and in recognition of John Philip Holland's designs and contributions to the Navy.

New Jersey has a long history building submarines for the Navy and has had a number of companies and a deep manufacturing base of New Jersey citizens involved in their construction. First of all, the ideas and designs that John Philip Holland first formulated in the 1870s became the company that is the genesis of what is now the Electric Boat Company, which is currently the primary manufacturer of submarines for the Navy. Today, more than 100 New Jersey companies supply critical materials to support the U.S. submarine program.

Despite the long history New Jersey has with submarines, not a single one bears the name of the state or even a city in the state. Within the Los Angeles class of submarines, which as you know are named after U.S. cities, New Jersey's neighbors, the State of Pennsylvania and New York

have been honored with three each: *Philadelphia*, *Pittsburgh*, *Scranton*, *New York City*, *Buffalo* and *Albany*. Furthermore, within the Ohio Class of submarines, there is the *Pennsylvania*. In addition, there are a number of landlocked states and cities that have been honored by having a submarine named after it.

Following the precedent of the Ohio Class of submarines and the tradition of battleships and cruisers, the current Virginia Class of submarines are, with a couple exceptions, named after U.S. states. As I understand, the keel of the next unnamed Virginia Class submarine, SSN-796, will be laid down in 2016. It is my hope that the SSN-796 follow the current naming tradition and is named the *SSN New Jersey*. By naming the SSN-796 after New Jersey, I believe my state's generous and historical contributions to the "Silent Service" will finally be recognized and appropriately honored. Additionally, the 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birthday of the U.S. Submarine Force will occur on April 11, 2015, which would provide an appropriate time to recognize both John Phillip Holland and New Jersey

After reviewing this historical connection between New Jersey and the U.S. Submarine Force, I hope that you would give your full consideration to naming the SSN-796 after the great state of New Jersey. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator